

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

April 24, 2008

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I urge you to immediately embargo imports of processed shrimp from Thailand and Bangladesh until the United States can conduct an investigation into recent allegations concerning gross labor abuses and sanitary conditions that could endanger the health of American consumers. The report released by the Solidarity Center entitled "The Degradation of Work: The True Cost of Shrimp," paints a grisly picture of the disturbing labor practices and unsanitary conditions used in countries to provide the American people with cheap foreign imports. The report alleges physical and sexual abuse, child labor, human trafficking and despicably low wages to be among the practices used to infiltrate our market. American consumers have the right to know if they are purchasing products made in such appalling and unsafe conditions.

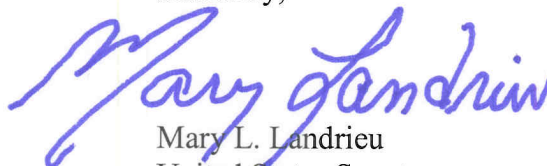
In 2002, shrimp became the most popular seafood in America. Shrimp is a \$13 billion global industry with the U.S. importing over \$4 billion worth. As such, our country plays a critical role in driving demand. In an attempt to undercut our domestic shrimpers, processing plants in these two countries are alleged to use grossly inadequate food safety, environmental and labor standards. If these reports are true, we are jeopardizing the health and safety of Americans, and harming our own law-abiding domestic producers.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time the U.S. has been alerted to the sub-par practices used to supply and undermine our market. The FDA on many occasions has cited unacceptable amounts of chloramphenicol in imports. This antibiotic is used to combat diseases commonly occurring in waste-clogged and parasite-infested ponds. It has been labeled a carcinogen and is illegal in the U.S., but repeatedly appears in imported shrimp.

Alone, the food safety issues are enough to embargo imports due to the health and safety concerns posed to all Americans. Those concerns, combined with the disgraceful labor conditions used to supply our market, demand an immediate prohibition against shrimp imports from these countries.

I appreciate your timely attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrieu  
United States Senator